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**Testimony to the
House Committee –Michigan Competitiveness**

**Provided by
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Director of Community and Governmental Affairs
Michigan Community Dental Clinics Inc.
May 16, 2013**

Chairman Shirkey, Members of the Committee, Citizens and Colleagues,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon. My name is Kim Singh and I am the Director of Community and Governmental Affairs for Michigan Community Dental Clinics Inc. (MCDC). MCDC is a private not-for-profit 501c3 dental services corporation established in 2006 focused on serving Medicaid and low-income uninsured persons throughout the State of Michigan.

MCDC currently operates 22 public dental clinics on behalf of local health departments. In calendar year 2012, our clinics served a total of 72,000 Medicaid and low income patients, providing over 194,000 office visits. Our innovative model based on a public-private partnership is able to deliver dental care for a population who otherwise has very limited or non-existent access to care.

Some facts –

- According to the 2000 *Oral Health in America a Report of the Surgeon General* – oral health is essential to overall health and well-being.
- Infections of the mouth such as periodontal (gum) disease can increase the risk for heart disease, can put pregnant woman at greater risk for a preterm delivery and can complicate the control of blood sugar for people with diabetes.
- Changes in the mouth are often the first signs of problems elsewhere such as immune disorders, cancer and stroke.
- Current research also suggests an association between Alzheimer's disease and periodontal disease.
- Each year an increasing number of individuals seek dental care in hospital emergency rooms.
- There were approximately 1,000 annual preventable dental related hospitalizations in Michigan from 2009-2010, with over 9 million in charges.

Michigan Community Dental Clinics commends the Legislature for moving forward with a bill to expand Medicaid eligibility. As you heard from Rick Murdock on Tuesday – Michigan's privately operated Managed Care Medicaid program is improving health status for enrollees and is saving hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

As you continue to deliberate on HB 4717 I would like to offer the following for your consideration to truly achieve a healthier Michigan population over the long term –

- **Assure that the Medicaid expansion incorporates the existing coverage that includes an adult dental benefit. Access to oral health services is essential to overall health – we cannot fix dental related problems in emergency departments.**
- **Eliminate the 48 month cap – Medicaid is an essential safety-net program providing health care benefits to 20% of the population in Michigan. People should not be arbitrarily disenrolled- 80% of current Medicaid enrollees are working and paying taxes.**
- **The current Medicaid system is built upon a State and Federal partnership to share in the costs. Do not include a provision to end the program if not paid for 100% by the Federal government. Pre-pay future year costs, with expected savings in years one through three.**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input – for the 350,000-400,000 residents that will be positively impacted by the expansion – I encourage you to expand Medicaid *without requirements that will create barriers to accessing care.*

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